

**Outdoor Activity Guidelines**  
For the Very High Fire Danger Index

Open Burning	Use fire tools and monitor the fire at all times. Restrict burning to early morning and late evening hours when low wind conditions exist. Examples: <u>Campfires</u> – Clear area around fire. <u>Brush, Field, Ditch, Haystack</u> – Clear fuel from the area surrounding the burn site.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools. Pay attention to fire hazards posed by exhaust systems and catalytic converters.
Smoking	Restrict smoking to areas free of combustible materials. Use ashtrays and proper disposal containers.
Fireworks	Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools. Restrict use to late afternoon and evening hours when low wind conditions exist, or as outlined by restrictions by local authorities.
Equipment Operations	Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools, as recommended. Examples: <u>Farming</u> – Conduct frequent inspections of farm machinery to reduce debris accumulation. <u>Petroleum Industry</u> – Confine blasting for seismic exploration by 10 feet or more of soil. Inspect and properly maintain equipment. <u>Welding</u> – Use spark arresters, as recommended, and keep a 10-foot radius from welding site cleared of combustible material. <u>Railroads</u> – Conduct weekly inspection of exhaust arrester systems and brakes.

**Outdoor Activity Guidelines**

Open Burning	Open burning is prohibited.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Off-road motorized travel is prohibited except for persons engaged in a trade, business, or occupation where it is required. Fire extinguishers and fire tools are required.
Smoking	Restrict smoking to inside of vehicles, places of habitation and areas cleared to mineral soil. Use ashtray and proper disposal containers.
Fireworks	Use of fireworks by individuals is prohibited.
Equipment Operations	<u>Farming</u> – Conduct frequent inspections of farm machinery to reduce debris accumulation. Remain at the work site one-half hour after operations are completed. <u>Petroleum Industry</u> – Confine blasting for seismic exploration by 10 feet or more of soil. Inspect and properly maintain equipment. Monitor burning of by-products. Remain at the work site one-half hour after operations are completed. <u>Welding</u> – Use spark arresters, as required, and keep a 10-foot radius from welding site cleared of combustible materials. Water tanks with 100 gallons and 100 feet of hose are required. <u>Railroads</u> – Conduct weekly inspections of exhaust arrester systems and brakes.

# North Dakota

## Rural

## Fire Danger

## Guide



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**Provided By Your Local Fire Service**

Contact Your Local Fire Service for  
Additional Information

In North Dakota, it's common practice during spring and fall to burn fields, trees and debris in agricultural and rural settings. It's also common practice for outdoor enthusiasts to build campfires while enjoying the state's ample outdoor recreational opportunities. Equipment operators also increase their activities during warmer months.

Each year, approximately 500 rural fires grow out of control, endangering people, wildlife, and causing damage to nearby acreage, buildings and other property. Inadequate control and burning during high fire danger conditions cause the majority of these fires.

The *North Dakota Rural Fire Danger Guide*, designed for landowners, equipment operators and outdoor enthusiasts, outlines procedures that, if allowed, will greatly reduce the chance of rural fires that threaten lives and property.

**OPEN BURNING REGULATIONS**

Open burning is regulated and restricted by the North Dakota Air Pollution Control Rules. Before burning, landowners, equipment operators and outdoor enthusiasts are urged to contact their local or district health departments or the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Air Quality. Specific requirements can be found in North Dakota Administrative Code, Chapter 33-15-04.

**FIRE DANGER INDEX**

The Fire Danger Index, issued by the National Weather Service (NWS), serves as a guide to reduce the number of uncontrollable outdoor fires. The index is an indication of rural fire potential throughout the state and provides landowners, equipment operators, outdoor enthusiasts and others with needed information about fire safety conditions.

The NWS divides the state into nine zones when determining the Fire Danger Index. The NWS calculates the fire danger index for each zone using predicted values for temperature, humidity, wind speed, cloud cover and vegetative greenness.

The index contains five ratings – low, medium, high, very high and extreme. Fires are more likely to occur on higher index days, and fires that occur on those days are more likely to grow large. Fire danger indexes do not predict how a specific fire will behave; however, they do give an indication of overall fire activity.

The following chart lists index ratings and fire danger descriptions:

Index Rating	Fire Danger Description
LOW	Weather and fuel indicators show probability of fire occurrence is low.
MEDIUM	Weather and fuel conditions indicate some potential for fire occurrence. Expect predictable fire behavior with moderate rates of spread.
HIGH	Fires are active. Expect moderate and occasional high rates of spread.
VERY HIGH	Fires spread rapidly and show erratic behavior. Dangerous burning conditions.
EXTREME	Potential for large fires exists. Fires spread rapidly. Extreme fire behavior is probable. Critical burning conditions.

The NWS also issues Fire Weather Forecasts and Red Flag Warnings that refer to weather conditions that could sustain extensive rural fire activity. These forecasts and warnings are used to alert land management agencies and land users when dangerous burning conditions and increased rural fires exist.

**OUTDOOR ACTIVITY GUIDELINES**

The NWS issues the North Dakota Rangeland Fire Danger Statement each morning during fire season, from April 1 to October 31. Information on current fire danger indexes is available through County Sheriff's

offices or the NWS web site, [www.crh.noaa.gov/bis](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/bis). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) radio also broadcasts information when the index rates are very high or extreme.

Whenever a fire danger index falls into the very high or extreme categories, certain guidelines on outdoor activities are recommended as a way to reduce the chance of life-threatening or property-damaging rural fires. During severe, extended dry conditions or drought, the Governor may issue a proclamation that makes these guidelines mandatory. Fines and other penalties may be assessed for failing to comply.

By law, landowners, equipment operators and outdoor enthusiasts are required to use firebreaks and proper precautions during all open burning situations. The following three charts list other outdoor activity guidelines for the five fire danger indexes:

**Outdoor Activity Guidelines  
For the Low, Medium, and High Fire Danger  
Indexes**

Open Burning	<i>Examples:</i> <u>Campfires</u> -- Clear the area around the fire. <u>Brush, Field, Ditch Haystack Fires</u> – Clear fuel from the area surrounding the burn site.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Pay attention to fire hazards posed by exhaust systems and catalytic converters.
Smoking	Use ashtrays and other proper containers
Fireworks	Avoid fire potential by following safety guidelines for projected aerial devices
Equipment Operations	Conduct routine maintenance to reduce conditions that may cause a fire.